# Minutes from a Meeting of the Concordia Council on Student Life Held on September 17, 2010 SGW H-769, 10 am

**PRESENT:** Ms. Elizabeth Morey (Chair), Ms. Lauren Broad (Secretary), Mr. Roger Côté, Ms. Melanie Drew, Ms. Laura Gallo, Ms. Katherine Hedrich, Mr. Daniel Houde, Mr. Abdullah Husen, Mr. Ramy Khoriaty, Ms. Taylor Knott, Mr. Zhuo Ling, Mr. Howard Magonet, Dr. Lata Narayanan, Ms. Morgan Pudwell, Ms. Dale Robinson, Ms. Teresa Seminara, Mr. Adrien Severyns, Ms. Katie Sheahan, Ms. Laura Stanbra, Ms. Brigitte St-Laurent, Ms. Lorraine Toscano, Ms. Rose Wangechi.

**ABSENT WITH REGRETS:** Mr. Gerald Beasley, Dr. Catherine Bolton, Ms. Claudie Boujaklian, Ms. Anna Chigogidze, Ms. Johanne De Cubellis, Ms. Holly Nazar.

ABSENT: Mr. Jacques Lachance.

## 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called the meeting to order. Mr. Severyns moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Magonet seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

### 2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to CCSL and noted that all members of the Council share the common goal of improving student life with a focus on the services available at the university. The Council is a parity committee, including an equal number of voting students and non-student representation. There are also several permanent observers sitting on the Council who are invited to join discussion, however do not have voting privileges. The Chair added that the Continuing Education student representative had not yet been appointed, but that she hoped the position would be filled by the next CCSL meeting. The Chair noted that the CCSL meetings would be a forum for dialogue and would provide members with a chance to share ideas in a respectful and informed manner. The Chair requested that if a motion is expected at an upcoming meeting, that the necessary documentation be made available to members prior to the meeting at which the motion will be proposed, to ensure that all Council members are well informed ahead of time. All documents should be sent to Ms. Broad to be distributed to the Council. The Chair invited each member of the Council to introduce themselves.

The Chair notified the Council that Ms. Louyse Lussier, Coordinator of Student Life Relations in the Dean of Students Office, had fallen ill over the summer, but was returning home shortly and that the office was hopeful that she would return in January 2011. Mr. Alex Oster, former CSU VP Sustainability, was currently helping the office in her absence.

The Chair congratulated all the student associations on the success of their Orientation activities. She added that only positive feedback had been received, and specifically that the CSU concert held on the Quadrangle at the Loyola Campus had been a huge endeavour that was very well organized and orchestrated.

The LIVE Centre, the university's new volunteer bureau, opened over the summer. Located on the sixth floor of the Hall building and reporting to Counselling & Development, it promotes Leadership, Initiative, Volunteer Engagement (LIVE) among students, staff and faculty. Valerie Millette, Coordinator of the LIVE Centre, was working hard to promote the centre and will be helping to organize various activities taking place throughout October for Volunteer Awareness Month.

The Co-curricular Record will be officially launched in the next couple of weeks. It is an official university document that recognizes students' volunteer and leadership engagement in university activities or initiatives off campus that are sponsored by university departments. Students will be able to access the system online through the Portal to update their file, which will then be validated by the appropriate person. The Chair requested that all student associations submit a list of the various volunteer and leadership positions within their group so that they may appear as recognized activities. There will be an appeal process established so that students may follow up if a validator denies their request.

The Dean of Students Office coordinated a Welcome Team at the university over the first few weeks of classes. Based on the model used at Congress 2010, volunteers were strategically placed on both campuses to help direct students and answer questions. Mr. Sohrab Mossaded, a recent Concordia graduate, was hired to coordinate the project and was very successful, recruiting over sixty student volunteers.

The revitalization of the Loyola Chapel continues through the Dean of Students Office and the Multi-faith Chaplaincy. The Chapel has been transformed into a multi-faith centre, with groups being encouraged to use it for numerous activities such as festivals, yoga or social gatherings. The Chair encouraged others to consider the beautiful space for their events.

The Student Services sector recently had a planning retreat to identify areas for the sector to get more involved in and to make recommendations. One area in which the Chair is involved is student engagement, and she noted that these issues would be brought to CCSL to discuss how people vision engaging students more, perhaps through focus groups. More information will be brought to CCSL in the upcoming months.

The Chair added that the Council was welcome to invite individuals from the university to attend a meeting to discuss topics of interest, to inform CCSL of interesting initiatives or special projects happening at the university. She asked that members of the Council notify Ms. Broad if they wanted to extend such an invitation.

## 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF APRIL 30, 2010

Mr. Severyns moved to approve the minutes from the meeting of April 30, 2010 and Ms. Sheahan seconded the motion.

## The motion passed unanimously.

## 4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF APRIL 30, 2010

## 4.1 MELS funding

Ms. Stanbra reported that the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) has a fund of \$25,000 available for healthy initiatives. As reported in the minutes of the April 30, 2010 meeting, CCSL approved a Take the Stairs Campaign targeted at students, staff and faculty. One area of focus was the stairwell in the GM building, which is home to Health Services and Financial Aid & Awards, two departments that receive a tremendous volume of students on a daily basis. Over the summer, Ms. Stanbra and Ms. Drew met with Facilities Management to discuss possibilities for renovating the stairwell. Despite hopes of having the project completed for the new school year, tenders were still out for the project. Ms. Stanbra was nevertheless hopeful that the project would be moving forward significantly over the upcoming weeks and students would continue to be encouraged to use the stairs. She also reported that there would be funds remaining available for improvements in some of the stairwells of the Hall building. Ms. Stanbra asked that the students notify her of particular stairwells that would be a priority for improvements. Another aspect of the campaign would be to hang posters or student art in the stairwells to beautify the space. Ms. Stanbra welcomed any comments and suggestions.

Mr. Husen said that the stairwells in the MB building were in more need of attention than those in the Hall building. He reported that there was continuous traffic for use of the elevators in the MB building, despite having wide, accommodating stairwells that give access to the first four floors. Mr. Husen commented that the unfavourable smell in the stairwells discourages students from using them. Ms. Stanbra noted the comment and added that the campaign will include making the stairwells more appealing and more signage to encourage use of the stairwells.

Ms. Drew noted as a point of clarification that the MELS funding was dependent on the project being associated with exercise or healthy eating, therefore it could not be used for any type of project. For those who were not on CCSL in past years, Ms. Drew added that this idea had been discussed for several years at CCSL, based on a Take the Stairs campaign initiated by the Université de Laval. Ms. Drew and Ms. Stanbra attempted to find ways to make using the stairwells more appealing and more apparent to the student population. She hoped that improved signage will greatly improve students' awareness as well.

Mr: Severyns inquired whether or not this was a long-term project that would be applied to other university buildings. Ms. Stanbra recalled that the MELS funding consisted of \$25,000, therefore the project would be quite limited in scope. She said that each year, CCSL would have the opportunity to discuss whether or not they wished to apply for the MELS funding for this particular project. In terms of long-term plans for the university, Ms. Stanbra noted that Facilities Management was quite enthusiastic about the project, and perhaps if the project is successful, it may warrant further funding from a currently undetermined source.

Mr. Severyns asked if there was any progress on the project for the escalators in the Hall building. Mr. Côté replied that this was a multi-year project estimated at \$12 million to upgrade the escalators. He reported that there will necessarily be some detouring of traffic flow while the upgrades are occurring, however it would not be driven around a wellness campaign, but rather as a functional solution to the renovations. While the MELS funding may end, there may be alternative sources of revenues for wellness initiatives or less costly projects to initiate. Facilities Management could certainly work in partnership and discuss possibilities for future projects. Mr. Côté suggested that Associate VP Facilities Management, Mr. Peter Bolla, be included in these discussions.

Ms. Toscano said that in the LB building, it is not permitted to use the stairwells. This restriction was put in place in 1992, and Ms. Toscano asked whether or not it could be reviewed in light of promoting wellness to the university community. Dr. Narayanan added that these issues should be considered at the time when new buildings are being constructed. She noted that a more visible stairwell would be more widely used. Dr. Narayanan suggested giving a minimal number of elevators in the GM building access to the lower floors, therefore encouraging more users to choose the stairs instead of longer waiting times. The Chair noted that an invitation would be extended to Mr. Bolla to attend the next meeting of CCSL to discuss these issues.

## 4.2 Participation Awards

The Chair reported that in past years there had been tuition waivers for eligible students who participated on major university committees, including CCSL. The tuition waiver program was suspended prior to the 2009-2010 academic year, however following discussion at CCSL, a sub-committee was formed to review the program and to make recommendations. After review, it was recommended and approved at CCSL that \$5,000 be set aside annually from the CCSL Special Projects Fund to finance the updated Committee Participation Award Program. Documentation had been circulated to members of CCSL with the approved motion explaining the program, as well as the eligibility requirements for students. To summarize, the Chair reported that from the 2009-2010 academic year, nine full-time students received the Committee Participation Award at an amount equivalent to six (6) credits at the Québec resident undergraduate tuition rate and five part-time students received the award at an amount equivalent to three (3) credits at the Québec resident undergraduate tuition rate, for a grand total of \$4,526.40. There are requirements for eligibility that must be met for a student to receive the award, and the secretary of each committee will provide the secretary of CCSL with an attendance record for the year in order to establish who is eligible. The information regarding the Committee Participation Award Program was sent to all the Presidents of each umbrella association in the summer months, to be distributed to all of their respective groups.

## 5. REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INFORMATION

#### 5.1 Sub-committees

The Chair said that there were still many vacant places on the CCSL sub-committees. She encouraged members of the Council to participate and asked that anyone who was interested email Ms. Broad to notify her.

### **CCSL Special Projects**

Ms. Stanbra reported that the Special Projects is a fund of \$150,000 administered by CCSL and its sub-committee. The funds are allocated to projects that enhance or contribute to the quality of student life and that engage the student body in a social, political, educational or cultural context. The sub-committee consists of a Student Services Director as the Chair, four undergraduate students, two graduate students, one student from the School of Extended Learning and the Assistant to the Dean of Students as a voting secretary. There are two deadlines for students to submit applications: October 15, 2010 and February 11, 2011. The sub-committee will read and evaluate all the applications through a secure online system, followed by a one-day review meeting to discuss the applications. The tentative dates set for the review meetings are October 29, 2010 for the fall semester and February 28, 2011 for the winter semester. Ms. Stanbra noted that it is important to review the

submissions as soon as possible after the deadline so that applicants will know if they have secured funding or not. The guidelines and application form are available on the Dean of Students website. Ms. Stanbra asked that members of the Council spread awareness to students and student groups of this funding that is available to them. Each year the number of applications submitted has increased, and to date approximately six had been received for the fall deadline, however most applications are received just prior to the deadline.

Mr. Ling asked if projects that had already taken place could apply retro-actively for funding and Ms. Stanbra confirmed that yes, these students would proceed with the normal application process and if approved, would receive funding to reimburse them for expenses incurred.

## **CCSL** Awards

The Chair noted the composition of the sub-committee as follows: the Dean of Students as Chair, three undergraduate students, one graduate student, one Student Services staff member from CCSL, one faculty member from CCSL and the Assistant to the Dean of Students as the non-voting secretary. The Chair said that the awards are a way of recognizing students, staff and faculty who have made an outstanding contribution to student life at the university. The criteria for applications are available on the Dean of Students website. Two years ago the Concordia University Volunteer Initiative (CUVI) Volunteer Recognition Awards were included in the Awards Night to recognize volunteerism at the university. In 2010, there were eight CCSL Awards given, eleven Volunteer Recognition Awards given and the new "Spirit of Giving Award" was introduced. This new award will be given annually, when merited, for an exceptional event and demonstration of giving that has occurred. In 2010, over sixty "Spirit of Giving" certificates were distributed to those in the Concordia community who helped with the Haiti relief efforts.

# Housing and Job Bank (HOJO)

Ms. St-Laurent reported that the former HOJO Coordinator, Mr. Jonathan Elston, was studying abroad, and in his absence the position was being filled by Ms. Leanne Ashworth. Ms. St-Laurent had not yet had a chance to meet with her, as Ms. Ashworth is undoubtedly quite busy learning the new position and beginning the school year. Traditionally, at the beginning of the academic year, HOJO will submit an annual report to CCSL for the preceding year to report on projects that were completed as well as a summary of their finances. Ms. St-Laurent expected that HOJO would be able to provide this report sometime in the fall semester when their activities had settled down. The Chair informed the Council that HOJO provided this annual report due to the fact that CCSL provides them with \$15,000 of funding annually.

#### Communication and Awareness Raising of the Student Services Sector

Ms. Drew raised as a point of clarity that this sub-committee originated in 2006-2007 as a task force in the Student Services sector, after it was agreed that alternative sources of funding for the sector needed to be identified. Following exhaustive analysis, the partners involved concluded that the issue was not necessarily a lack of funding, but rather a lack of awareness amongst the student population as to what services were available to them. From these findings, the sub-committee was formed. As Chair of the sub-committee in 2009-2010, Ms. Drew acknowledged that there was not much progress achieved in the previous year due to unavailability of sub-committee members. Unfortunately and with no fault on any member in particular, scheduling conflicts limited the productivity of the group. Despite this, the general consensus was that the current methods of communicating information of the sector were not ideal and were failing to bring awareness to the student population. The Directors of the sector realize that this must become a priority and believe that the issue must be considered at a sector wide level, not just at CCSL. Ms. Drew stressed the importance of student involvement in order to identify weaknesses in communication and to assist in bringing awareness to students.

A discussion ensued on the importance of using updated technologies, including Facebook, to help disseminate information to students early in their academic careers at the university. It was agreed that virtualization of any kind would be the direction that the sector would need to take in order to improve awareness, without ignoring the value of such direct communication as professors informing students in the classroom. Mr. Khoriaty notified the Council that as the CSU VP Clubs & Outreach, his main concern would be communicating vital information to the student population. Mr. Khoriaty noted that he could include information on the many services available to students in promotion materials, videos, and other mediums being used. Ms. Seminara added that as members of student governance, they would have direct contact with students and student groups on a daily basis and would be happy to assist with awareness raising.

The Chair noted that every year there are lunches set up between the executives of the Umbrella Associations and the Student Services Directors in order to meet and discuss collaboration over the upcoming year. The Chair reported that she also believes in the importance of using faculty members as communicators, which is why she had attended the new faculty orientation, as well as attending a meeting of each Faculty Council. The Chair and Mr. Magonet were able to meet with the new Chairs of the departments at the orientation. The Dean of Students Office sends out information regularly to all the student associations through a list serve. University Communications has initiated a monthly newsletter called "NOW" that will be going to all students. This will be a way of getting information to the students, but student associations are also encouraged to promote their major events through the newsletter as well. They may send this information to the Dean of Students Office to be submitted.

The Chair confirmed that the sub-committee for Communication and Awareness Raising of the Student Services Sector will be dissolved and that the topic will be added as a regular item on the CCSL agenda.

#### 5.2 Year-end Financial Statement 2009-2010

Mr. Côté distributed the "Report to CCSL Student Services Year-End Statement 2009-2010", pointing out that it was for information purposes only. Mr. Côté began by providing some background information to the Council. CCSL has the responsibility to review the Student Services budget and to give recommendations regarding the Student Services fee, with the authority to implement any recommendations residing with the Board of Governors at the university. The Student Services sector operates on a three-year budget cycle, in order to provide a more long-term view of the plans and objectives of the sector. Discussion regarding budget are quite lengthy at CCSL, monopolizing much of the conversation at meetings. The 2010-2011 fiscal year is year two of the three-year cycle. The Student Services operating budget is considered to be cost neutral to the university bottom line. Funding provided by the Ministry of Education is earmarked specifically for the sector and the grants cannot be transferred for other operational needs of the institution.

There are three sources of revenue for the Student Services sector: the Student Services fee per credit; a government grant earmarked specifically for Student Services; and self-generated revenues. The term FTE, or Full-Time Equivalency, is a unit of measurement established by the government to describe a certain level of academic activity. An FTE represents 30 credits of registration activity from students, regardless of if one or more students are represented within the 30 credits, whether it is at the undergraduate or at the graduate level of study. When the total registration activity of the university is calculated and divided by 30, you will have the total number of FTEs. Universities are typically funded on an FTE basis, however fees are typically charged on a per credit basis. In order to prepare a budget, forecasting must be done on the anticipated number of FTEs, which is always a difficult task and will have a great effect on the future revenue stream. Mr. Côté emphasized that although the sector may receive funding based on an FTE of 30 credits, that FTE might include three students. In reality, there are many more students registered than the number of FTEs. Student Services is funded on a "raw" or "unweighted" FTE basis, which means that an FTE is not differentiated by its discipline of study. However, the university's operating grant is given on the basis of a "weighted" FTE, therefore different disciplines will have different FTEs assigned to them. A high weighted discipline, such as Biochemistry, might be at an FTE value of 2 or 3. When this value is multiplied by a dollar amount, it results in a much higher value.

Mr. Côté brought the Council's attention to the "Report to CCSL Student Services Year-End Statement 2009-2010", showing the netted expenditures for the unit. The Student Services sector retains 78.4% of the government grant per FTE, while the remaining 21.6% goes to Recreation & Athletics. The Student Services per credit fee is \$10.26, with a forecasted FTE/Credit of 741,000, resulting in a forecasted revenue of \$7,602,660. The actual revenues from the Student Services per credit fee as of May 31, 2010 were \$7,883,635, considerably higher than expected, due to a rise in actual FTE growth. This growth is attributed to the JMSB, as well as a greater number of students at the graduate level. Mr. Côté explained that there is a Continuing Education grant because the sector does serve Continuing Education students, however they are not registered in credit courses and do not pay a Student Services fee. There is an arrangement with the School of Continuing Education that their course activity is converted into FTEs and the school will in turn pay the equivalent of what the Student Services fee would have been. The Health Services grant is the result of the fact that the department does provide its services to employees of Concordia. In order that the responsibility of providing the services to staff and faculty does not fall on students, the university provides a grant to support access for employees to Health Services. The resulting total revenue stream for 2009-2010 was \$9.6 million. Mr. Côté explained that the netted

expenses for the sector appear by unit. On a unit per unit level, the forecasts were quite close to the actual expenses at year-end. The "Sector Commitments" line is the residual revenue from the previous year, which is still at the disposal of CCSL. Since the sector is cost-neutral to the university, this appears as an expense so that the budget will balance at year-end. There remains, however, a credit to the sector of \$368,103. The Student Services sector is the only sector within the university that carries over a surplus from year to year. Mr. Côté warned that this surplus must not be taken for granted, since the three-year budget forecasted a deficit in years one and two, with a surplus in year three that would offset the previous years deficits to result in a balanced budget over the three year cycle. Mr. Côté added that the Council needed to be mindful before spending any surplus, however the opportunity would arise to revisit forecasts for the remainder of the cycle. It would be premature to anticipate a surplus at this point of the budget cycle. Mr. Côté noted that he would be happy to answer any questions or concerns regarding the budget.

Mr. Severyns asked where the funding comes from to provide access for Concordia employees to Health Services and Mr. Côté recalled that the funding was provided through the university's operating budget. Since employees do not pay into the Student Services operating budget, the university provides this funding on behalf of the employees to ensure that they maintain access to the services without placing any burden on the students.

Mr. Husen asked for clarification regarding the projected deficit in the budget. Mr. Côté confirmed that there was a projected deficit in year one (2009-2010) of the cycle, however there ended up being a surplus at year-end due to the higher than anticipated FTEs. Mr. Husen inquired as to why there was a loan repayment in the budget and Mr. Côté explained that it was the last payment in the ten-year repayment loan from a project at the Loyola campus, including renovations to areas in the Administration Building. Funds were borrowed from the university to pay for approximately \$1 million worth of renovations. These renovations were discussed and approved at CCSL. Mr. Côté added that FTEs would have to be monitored over the course of the year in order to determine whether the actual numbers are following the forecast and to review at CCSL how any surplus may want to be used. The current three-year cycle saw no increase in the Student Services or Recreation & Athletics fee. These fees are understandably always a big issue in any budget discussions since the unified goal is to keep them as low as possible. One approach that has been used in past years is to carry over any surplus from previous budget cycles to offset or eliminate the need to increase the Student Services or Recreation & Athletics fees. The surplus from the 2006-2009 budget cycle was used to maintain the fees at a flat level over the current three-year cycle. The fees were maintained by using this surplus, as well as by reducing considerably the operating expenses of the sector. Mr. Côté noted that this approach could be used again, if agreed, for the 2012-2015 budget cycle.

Ms. Sheahan distributed the "Report to CCSL Recreation & Athletics Year-End Statement 2009-10", noting that the introductory remarks made by Mr. Côté regarding the structure of fees, FTEs, the government grant, apply to the Recreation & Athletics budget as well. Ms. Sheahan said that the actual of both the government grant per FTE and the Student Services fee per credit were higher at year-end than the forecasted amounts. For "Sponsorship", the amount budgeted was based on past experience, however in the 2009-2010 year, the revenues in cash did not reach the anticipated amount. This is due greatly to the fact that a large portion of the sponsorship support is received in kind, through donations such as equipment, materials, credit with university departments or food. There was over \$200,000 worth of in kind sponsorship over the year, which is not accounted for in the Year-End Statement. Ms. Sheahan noted that projections in the past few years have been quite conservative due to the state of the economy, however relationship building with sponsorship partners has been maintained and developed over time. Ms. Sheahan hoped that in the future, the budget figure would be adjusted to account for this discrepancy and to recognize the significance of the in kind sponsorship. The "Event Sales/Registration" revenue achieved an amount significantly higher than anticipated, resulting from new programming and rent received from the opening of the new Stinger Dome at the Loyola campus. New programs and greater participation in existing programs had a huge effect on revenue. Increases in human resources to deliver the added services did offset some of these revenues. Of these new employees, many are part of the work-study program, which employs students, with few being full-time employees. The non-salary side of the expenses were lower than anticipated, despite still delivering many services, meeting the demands of a growing student body and replacing old equipment through re-investment. "Replacement and Re-Investment" was much greater in the previous year, however with funds being re-invested into existing facilities, such as the locker rooms, the total remaining was significantly lower in 2009-2010. The Loyola complex is a focus of these resources. Ms. Sheahan noted that the unanticipated higher FTE count was the only reason why any amount was set aside for this purpose. Ms. Sheahan pointed out that the budget did balance at year-end. She added that construction was

taking place on both campuses, with recent water damage affecting areas of Le Gym downtown and the PERFORM Centre well under way at the Loyola campus.

Mr. Khoriaty inquired what the non-salary portion of the budget would include and Ms. Sheahan replied that it would include everything other than salary, such as paper, publications, advertising, equipment, speakers, and many other expenses of the department.

Mr. Husen asked for more detail about the PERFORM Centre. Ms. Sheahan answered that it was the brainchild of researchers in the Exercise Science department. It will be a research centre for those studying in Exercise Physiology as it can impact those suffering from the six major illnesses. There is a major emphasis on research, as well as an emphasis on sports medicine and athletic therapy. The centre will be attached to the Loyola arena, and construction is moving forward at a very quick pace.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Stanbra reported that there are two bursary programs currently available through the Financial Aid & Awards Office, with approximately \$800,000 available in funding for undergraduate students. It includes the In Course Bursary Program, for returning students to Concordia, with a deadline of mid-October and the International Student Tuition Bursary Program, for new and returning international Concordia students paying the international student rate, also with a deadline of mid-October. Ms. Stanbra encouraged students to help spread awareness. Students apply for these bursaries through the Portal. More information is available on the Financial Aid & Awards website.

The Chair recalled that following the Student Services Sector retreat, a strategic framework was put in place to explore three main issues of importance to the university, and that she would be exploring Student Engagement. Ms. Sheahan reported that herself, Ms. St-Laurent and Mr. Magonet were on the Communications subcommittee, which was discussing many of the same issues just considered regarding how communication will impact connecting with students. Ms. Sheahan suggested an additional meeting outside the regularly scheduled CCSL meetings, dedicated to examining some of the ideas and issues at hand more in depth. Ms. Stanbra reported that she could provide more information on the third category of Metrics at a future CCSL meeting.

## 7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for October 22, 2010 in SGW-H-769 at 10am.

#### 8.TERMINATION OF MEETING

Ms. Drew motioned to terminate the meeting. Ms. Stanbra seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.